Decision Summary – Licence exemption granted to Zenith Pacific (DBS-GTS) Pty Ltd – May 2026

UTILITIES COMMISSION
OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

Decision

In accordance with 87 of the *Electricity Reform Act 2000* (the ER Act), and with the approval of the Minister for Mining and Energy (the Minister), the Utilities Commission has granted an exemption to Zenith Pacific (DBS-GTS) Pty Ltd (Zenith) (ACN 624 108 096) from the requirement to hold a network and retail licence under section 14 of the ER Act, with respect to the following:

Subject to the operations remaining isolated from any regulated electricity network in the Northern Territory, the operations in the electricity supply industry covered by this exemption are:

- the ownership, operation and maintenance of electricity network infrastructure the geographical area associated with the Tanami Mine; and
- the supply and sale of electricity to Newmont Tanami at the Tanami Mine.

Under section 87 of the ER Act, the Commission has made the following decision about the terms and conditions applicable to Zenith under the exemption:

The exemption is also subject to the following conditions:

- the exempt party must from time to time provide the Commission, in a manner and form to be determined by the Commission, such information necessary to the performance of its functions under any applicable laws that the Commission may request; and
- the exempt party must, within six months of the commencement of the exemption, prepare a safety management and mitigation plan consistent with good electricity industry practice for the safe operation of the electricity infrastructure owned or operated under this exemption, and submit the plan to the Commission for approval.

Background

Zenith owns and operates electricity generation and network assets at the Newmont Tanami Mine. Its operations commenced in 2018 under arrangements with Newmont Tanami Pty Ltd.

Zenith's generation assets consist of the Dead Bullock Soak and Granites Power Stations, with a combined generating capacity of 101.5 MW. This includes a 9.2 MW battery energy storage system. The facilities are interconnected via a 66 kV transmission line and associated network infrastructure, which supplies electricity to on-site mining operations.

All electricity generated by Zenith is supplied exclusively to Newmont Tanami under a Power Purchase Agreement. Under this arrangement, Newmont Tanami takes delivery of electricity at the relevant connection points and uses it for on-site mining operations.

On 27 February 2026, the Commission received an application from Zenith for an exemption under the ER Act. The Commission treats applications for exemptions as applications for a licence in accordance with section 15 of the ER Act. The Commission then determines whether a licence or an exemption is the most appropriate regulatory outcome.

In its application, Zenith states that its generation activities fall within the class exemption under regulation 3A(2) of the Electricity Reform (Administration) Regulations 2000. It further submits that its network and retail activities satisfy the principles for granting an exemption under section 87 of the ER Act.

Assessment

The Commission assessed Zenith's application for a licence exemption and undertook a four-week public consultation process on the application and received no submissions.

With the approval of the Minister, the Commission has granted Zenith an exemption from the requirement to hold a network and retail licence under the ER Act for its current operations at the Newmont Tanami Mine.

In simplified terms, the Commission's decision is based on the following considerations:

- Previous experience in supplying electricity in remote areas, as well as its financial and staffing resources.
- The operations appear to have the necessary technical capability to safely and reliably supply electricity to the mining site. This is supported by:
    - detailed system documentation such as site layouts, surveys, and single line diagrams;
    - Zenith's full ownership and operation of the generation and network assets, which provides clear operational responsibility;
    - no reported safety or reliability incidents at the site since operations began in 2018;
    - a detailed Power Purchase Agreement with its sole customer, Newmont Tanami Pty Ltd, which sets out clear obligations for electricity supply, maintenance, outages, metering, and dispute resolution.
- No issues or concerns were raised during public consultation, suggesting the exemption is not opposed by stakeholders.
- Zenith's generation activities fall within a class exemption under regulation 3A(2) of the Regulations.
- The Commission considers that licensing Zenith would cost more than the likely regulatory benefit. The risks of allowing Zenith to operate under an exemption are also considered low, as the system is isolated and only supplies the mining site.
- Zenith does not supply electricity to small customers. Its only customer is Newmont Tanami.
- The existing contractual arrangements between Zenith and Newmont Tanami provide appropriate protections for the customer, so additional protections under a licensing regime are not required.

This exemption is granted solely to Zenith and is non-transferable.